

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A form processing device for reading a field data file storing data to be overlaid onto a defined field in a form, and overlaying data of the field data file 5 onto a field in the form, the form processing device comprising:

determination means for determining, if the data of the field data file is description specifying an external file, whether the description of the data is 10 in a URL format;

overlayment means for downloading the external file from a network server in compliance with Internet protocols and overlaying the data of the downloaded external file onto the field in the form if the 15 description is determined to be in a URL format by the determination means.

2. A form processing method for reading a field data file storing data to be overlaid onto a defined field 20 in a form, and overlaying data of the field data file onto a field in the form, the form processing method comprising:

a determination step of determining, if the data of the field data file is description specifying an 25 external file, whether the description of the data is in a URL format;

an overlaying step of downloading the external
file from a network server in compliance with Internet
protocols and overlaying the data of the downloaded
external file onto the field in the form if the
5 description is determined to be in a URL format at the
determination step.

3. A program for causing a computer to execute form
processing of reading a field data file storing data to
10 be overlaid onto a defined field in a form, and
overlaying data of the field data file onto a field in
the form; the program comprising:

a determination step of determining, if the data
of the field data file is description specifying an
15 external file, whether the description of the data is
in a URL format;

an overlaying step of downloading the external
file from a network server in compliance with Internet
protocols and overlaying the data of the downloaded
20 external file onto the field in the form if the
description is determined to be in a URL format at the
determination step.

4. The program according to claim 3; further
25 comprising a storing step of storing the external file
downloaded based on a predetermined URL from the

network server, into a local drive in association with
the URL;

wherein the overlaying step downloads the external
file specified in the field data file from the network
5 server and overlays the data of the downloaded external
file onto the field in the form if the description is
determined to be in a URL format at the determination
step and the URL does not correspond to any of URLs of
the external files stored at the storing step.

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5. The program according to claim 4; wherein the
overlaying step downloads the external file from the
network server and overlays the data of the downloaded
external file onto the field in the form if the time
15 stamp of the external file stored at the storing step
is older than the time stamp of the external file in
the network server specified in the field data file,
even if the description is determined to be in a URL
format at the determination step and the URL
20 corresponds to the URL of the external file stored at
the storing step.

6. The program according to claim 4; wherein the
overlaying step reads the data of the external file
25 stored at the storing step and overlays it onto the
field of the form if the description is determined to
be in a URL format at the determination step and the

URL corresponds to the URL of the external file stored at the storing step, and furthermore, if the time stamp of the external file stored at the storing step is not older than the time stamp of the external file in the network server specified in the field data file.

7. The program according to claim 5; wherein, if an external file identical to the downloaded external file is already stored in the local drive, the storing process deletes the external file already stored and stores the downloaded external file in the local drive.

8. The program according to claim 4; wherein the storing step stores the downloaded external file in the local drive if it is smaller than a predetermined file capacity.

9. The program according to claim 4; wherein the storing step deletes an external file stored in the local drive if the file capacity of the downloaded external file is larger than the free space of the local drive.

10. The program according to claim 3; wherein, if the field associated with the data of the field data file is a field defined as one for a file-type data, the determination step determines that the data of the

field data file is description specifying the external
file, and determines whether the data of the field data
file determined to be the description specifying the
external file is described in a URL format.